

Message Text

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AMEMBASSY OSLO
AMEMBASSY OTTAWA
AMEMBASSY EYKJAVIK
AMEMBASSY STOCKHOLM
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UNCLAS COPENHAGEN 3815

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SUBJ: GREENLAND HOME RULE COMMISSION MEETS AGAIN

REF: COPENHAGEN 3278

SUMMARY: THE GREENLAND HOME RULE COMMISSION MET IN COPENHAGEN NOVEMBER 1 AND 2 TO CONSIDER THE NEXT STEPS IN THE EFFORT TO TRANSFER SOME RESPONSIBILITY FOR THEIR OWN GOVERNMENT TO THE GREENLANDERS. THE DISCUSSION ON RIGHTS TO GREENLAND SUBSOIL CONTINUED WITH THE SUJUMUT REPRESENTATIVE PUSHING FOR A FULL-SCALE LEGAL EXAMINATION OF THE GREENLANDERS' RIGHTS TO UNDERGROUND NATURAL RESOURCES.
END SUMMARY

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1. THE GREENLAND HOME RULE COMMISSION MET IN COPENHAGEN

NOVEMBER 1 AND 2 TO REVIEW PROGRESS TOWARD HOME RULE FOR GREENLAND AND THE STEPS TO BE TAKEN NEXT. IN EARLY OCTOBER THE COMMISSION'S PROPOSAL FOR A NEW HOME RULE MECHANISM TO BE INSTALLED IN GREENLAND WAS PUBLISHED AS A BASIS FOR DISCUSSION AND INVOLVEMENT OF GREENLANDERS IN THIS PROCESS. THE COMMISSION PROPOSAL FORESEES, AS IN THE FAROE, AN ELECTED RESPONSIBLE "LANDSTING" OF 18-21 MEMBERS AND AN ADMINISTRATIVE COUNCIL ("LANDSTYRE") OF 3-5 MEMBERS. THE PROPOSAL FURTHER SUGGESTS A ROLE FOR GREENLANDERS IN THE ADMINISTRATION OF TAXES AND IN THE CONDUCT OF LABOR AND SOCIAL AFFAIRS AS WELL AS IN EDUCATIONAL AND CULTURAL AFFAIRS, THE FIELDS MOST TALKED ABOUT IN CONNECTION WITH THE ESTABLISHMENT OF HOME RULE IN GREENLAND. HOW THE GREENLANDERS WILL BE INVOLVED IN CONSIDERATION OF THE PROPOSAL AND WHETHER OR NOT IT WILL BE SUBJECT TO A REFERENDUM HAVE NOT BEEN DECIDED. IN THE END, THE DANISH FOLKETING WILL HAVE TO ADOPT IMPLEMENTING LEGILATION.

2. AT THE REQUEST OF SOME OF THE GREENLANDERS, THE SUBJECT OF RIGHTS TO GREENLAND'S UNDERGROUND NATURLA RESOURCES WAS DISCUSSED. THE COMMISSION AGREED THAT PRIME MINISTER JORGENSEN'S INTERPRETATION OF THE LAW, AS PRESENTED TO THE FOLKETING OCTOBER 6 (THAT SOVEREIGNTY WAS INDIVISIBLE AND RIGHTS TO SUCH RESOURCES COULD NOT BE TRANSFERRED BY THE KINGDOM OF DENMARK TO ANY OF ITS PARTS), WAS ACCEPTABLE. THE MAJORITY OF THE COMMISSION MEMBERS FROM GREENLAND AGREED THAT THE PROPOSALS OF THE COMMISSION, GIVING THE GREENLAND HOME RULE ORGANS A VETO RIGHT OVER DECISIONS RELATING TO THE EXPLOITATION OF GREENLAND'S UNDERGROUND NATURAL RESOURCES, SATISFIED THE DEMAND OF THE GREENLAND PROVISIONAL COUNCIL OCTOBER 28, 1976 (SEE REFTEL). ON THAT DATE THE COUNCIL UNANIMOUSLY DECLARED THAT UNDERGROUND NATURAL RESOURCES OF GREENLAND BELONG TO THE LOCAL INHABITANTS AND NOT THE DANISH STATE.

3. SUJUMUT REPRESENTATIVE ON COMMISSION, FOLKETING MEMBER LARS EMIL JOHANSEN, DISAGREED AND CALLED FOR A LEGAL EXPLORATION OF THE QUESTION OF OWNERSHIP RIGHTS TO GREENLAND'S MINERAL RESOURCES. (SUJUMUT IS AN INDIGENOUS, UNCLASSIFIED

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RELATIVELY RADICAL GREENLAND POLITICAL PARTY.) THERE HAVE BEEN REPORTS THAT AT SUJUMUT REQUEST, A DANISH INTERNATIONAL LAWYER WILL PRESENT THIS QUESTION TO THE UNITED NATIONS HUMAN RIGHTS COMMITTEE. THE PLEA TO UN COMMITTEE WILL BE BASED ON THE DANISH ADHERENCE TO TWO UN CONVENTIONS WHICH STATE THAT "EVERY PEOPLE" HAS A RIGHT TO DISPOSE FREELY OF ITS NATURAL RESOURCES.

4. THE HOME RULE COMMISSION WILL MEET AGAIN IN GODTHAAB

AT THE END OF NOVEMBER.

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